

Management Ideas



FOR STILL BETTER

RESULTS

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REPUTATION

RENEWAL

a monthly newsletter to key executive-leaders on practices, possibilities and ideas generally for stepped up performance
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*One of the joys of a festive season is to say
THANK YOU for being with us and to wish you well*

3735 PERSON OF THE YEAR

Whether you are Miss Mulund of the Year or the Manager of the Year, there is a self-offering or others nominating. In the case of the Man/Woman of the Year, it is a searching - a searching by an editorial team, **The Week's** editorial team in this case.

It would be revealing to know whom all they considered before they zeroed in on one person. In my view, a note on them as well will be welcome.

As a student of human excellence in general and corporate excellence in particular, I have been wishing for such stories appearing atleast EVERY month, in EVERY periodical. I am thankful though for one of them doing it atleast once a year, and in depth, and now for 15 years.

The person chosen for a detailed account for 1997 is **ALICE GARG**.

Moved by the plight of children in some of the most backward villages of Rajasthan, Alice

Garg decided to give some of them a good education, the foundation for a decent life. From this effort of a young teacher in the 1960s grew Bal Rashmi that has today transformed the lives of over 3000 children and their families in nearly 300 villages of the state. She has taught them how to live with pride and self-respect.

The story is movingly told in the December 28th, 1997, 15th anniversary issue of **THE WEEK**.

In small and high places, we have thousands in our country who are pursuing excellence as a way of life and this account is only symbolic of such people. In development journalism, such people should be written up - not for their sake (they are beyond praise and blame - but for the sake of the millions, especially the young, who are yet to concede that pursuit of excellence is a viable alternative. It is an onward journey, upward journey, worthwhile journey, a uniquely human journey. You may like to get the story, make reprints and give them the widest distribution among your stakeholders.

Here are *EXCERPTS* from the report:

SOME VISIBLE FEATURES:

Started in a humble rented home with the support of the family members, today the society can boast of the following and more:

CHILDREN'S homes: Bal Rashmi Society runs a Destitute Home for abandoned/orphaned children; ashram school for scheduled caste children; Kilkari, home for abandoned infants; Bhavishya Nirman Kendra, a vocational training centre for older children; Rachanalaya, a centre at Khedi for educating children through the play way method.

Schools: Three primary and three upper primary schools for the slum children of Jaipur; one rural primary and one rural upper primary school in Bassi tehsil.

Health care: A hospital and five sub-centres in and near Lalgah offer primary health care services, comprehensive maternal and child care and family planning services. Bal Rashmi's mobile vans cover 86 villages, providing treatment at the doorstep. Eye camps and health education camps are held periodically.

Empowerment of women: The attempt is to make them aware of their rights—legal, social, economic and political. The three components are: awareness, action, support. And the target groups are the tribal groups such as the Sansis, Meenas, Kolies, Bhils, Bairwas and Raigars.

Income generation project: Involves programmes to train families of scavengers and tribals in locally relevant skills and helps them get loans. Self-help groups of women are formed and they are helped to expand their vocation and augment income.

Besides these programmes, the society also built houses for flood victims and provides legal aid.

GURU

"He (Diwakar Agashe of Buldana fame) is my guru in the field of social work. I was 26 or 27 and he was twice my age...

"He gave me physical and inner strength. Don't expect shabashi ever", he told me once.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

QUESTION : What is the public reaction to Bal Rashmi and you?

ANSWER: People in the villages are happy with us. We are there because they want us; they have made us part of themselves. But there are others who tell people, "Don't go to Didi. The Bal Rashmi people are terrible and will land you in trouble with the government." But I preempt all this by addressing corner meetings in every village we go to.

QUESTION : Who are "they"?

ANSWER : The police, the money lenders, the block level political party workers...

All those whose vested interests we are hitting.

QUESTION : What has been Bal Rashmi's biggest hurdle?

ANSWER : I feel that the well-to-do people lack social sensitivity towards the poor. They only raise questions. How do they have so many kids, why do they cheat, where do they get money for liquor, etc. At the same time, they will extract work out of them. I say: they don't come up despite long hours of hard work because the rich don't pay, and merely find fault to cut wages.

The government officials, with exceptions, don't think of doing anything for them. Everything is "in process" or "in a procedure" which will take 40 or 50 years. Relief is never given to the needy immediately. How then can it be relief? When you release sugar and wheat after three months, what will people eat during that period? I need food daily. The January food should be given on January 1, not January 30. The rich store food for a whole year, not the poor.

Under the food-for-work programme the government pays three, four or six months later. The same is true of old-age pension, unemployment allowance, handicapped people's allowance, scholarships for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students. It may be 100 rupees, but it means a lot to them.

QUESTION : The government seems to be abdicating its role to NGOs.....

ANSWER : It is an NGO's business to carry the government programme to the people,

particularly those who are in remote areas. But not many NGOs are able to do that. We need more people in the field of implementation, we have plenty involved in planning programmes.

When Bal Rashmi was registered, there was hardly any concept of NGO. It's a voluntary organisation. The terminology changes the concept. I voluntarily quit my job to do this. I am not particularly non-governmental. Now we have party-based, religion-based, caste-based, Gandhian, non Gandhian and leftist NGOs.

[Starting a] voluntary organisation in those days meant to forego status. And NGOs are very status-conscious.

QUESTION : What change do you see in your constituency—the poor?

ANSWER : These families are more relaxed, not worried about two square meals. They are coming up in education, and socially too.

There was a liquor shop near some houses, and the women themselves took up the matter with the collector. I only wrote the letter they wanted me to. In Saipura village which was waterlogged, they shocked the organisers of a CM's visit, by screaming about it in front of him.

They protest when a teacher is absent or a doctor doesn't attend to them. Earlier they'd be drooped with folded hands. Now they stand erect, and from time to time smile, raise questions.

QUESTION : That should be a matter of joy...?

ANSWER : Satisfaction there never will be. We pull some out of their pathetic lot, but there are thousands more, and there are very few to shoulder the responsibility. Every child we deal with becomes our responsibility complete with his or her family.

Satisfaction can come only when all of them have a decent home, are healthy, don't sleep hungry and there are no atrocities against them. That will never happen in the near future because institutions responsible for that are not functioning.

QUESTION : But aren't more and more NGOs coming up.

ANSWER : All of us have something to share. Some have money, some have knowledge, but most of us, including the NGOs, are not sharing the responsibility. We work on an ad

hoc basis. Like one health check-up for publicity. Those programmes show there is a need, but we have no permanent programmes, only formalities to fulfill.

QUESTION : What is the secret behind the people's acceptance of Bal Rashmi?

ANSWER : We have worked at their level, kept their priorities in mind, and made them equal participants in all programmes. We have kept their self-respect intact, and we have merely done what they want us to do: respond to their needs. They just needed someone to guide them along.

And flexibility is the key to our success. No centre where specific resource persons are brought, and an unwilling community is forced an alien skill, can succeed. Whatever skills people have, or whatever they think they can do to earn a living is what we help them to do.

3736 WORK AND SPIRITUALITY:

*A comprehensive directory of resources to help organizations improve performance by addressing employees' spiritual concerns has been published by **The Spirit of Health**. It covers topics such as creativity, intuition, ethics, community concerns, corporate conscience, leadership, work and family and health.*

This 370 pages directory gives details of over 600 books, videos, news letters, on-line services, consultants and other resources. It is priced at U.S.\$69 plus postage and handling.

The same publication has brought out handy, pithy brochures on the following themes: Commitment, compassion, craftsmanship, creativity, enrollment, extraordinary results, inspiration, integrity, intuition, purpose, responsibility and vision. These have been prepared by the internationally acclaimed authority on Workplace Spirituality, Martin Rutte. (An article by him on the subject is reproduced in this issue.)

*You may write to the publishers **THE SPIRIT OF HEALTH** at 114 Washington Ave. Point Richmond CA 94801 or fax 510 236 1979. 55c a copy. Minimum quantity 10. Shipping and handling extra.*

3737 SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

by Martin Rutte

The nature and meaning of work is undergoing a profound evolution, one as profound as the shift from the agricultural to the industrial age. Two forces are helping to accelerate this evolution: fear and the emergence of a more personal spirituality. The fear is of job loss and of having to do more with less. The emergence of spirituality points to the desire that there be more to work than survival. It's the yearning for work to be a place in which we both experience and express our deep soul and spirit.

What Is Work?

We have traditionally thought of work as a secure place in which hard labour and loyal service assured a bright future. For many, work was a place where we went to earn our daily living, to make money for shelter, food, clothing and some luxuries. Essentially, we worked to survive. We thought the company was the source of that survival. We put our faith and trust in the company. However, the unwritten agreement about the nature of work has been shattered. No longer are people confident of continuous and secure employment.

Massive layoffs, work exported overseas, technology replacing people, even successful companies laying off people - all of these have resulted in fear, anxiety and "dispiritedness" in the workplace. Traditional strategic solutions, such as re-engineering and TQM, have reduced personnel and increased profits, but they have also led to an increased sense of malaise.

Paralleling the fear and anxiety is a hunger, a longing for life to be more meaningful, more real, more authentic. Look at the dramatic increase in the number of spiritual books on the best-seller lists.

The baby-boomer generation is reaching midlife and is beginning to ask questions about morality, values and what's really important. And because this group is so large, it's concerns influence the thinking and attitudes of the rest of society. The increasing concern and involvement with the bio-environment is also a spiritual issue. As Fritjoff Capra says,

When the concept of human spirit is understood as the mode of consciousness in which the individual feels connected to the cosmos as a whole, it becomes clear that ecological awareness is spiritual in its deepest sense.

These two major factors, the fear of job loss and an increasing spiritual longing, call for the introduction of spirituality into the WORKPLACE. However, when we discuss "spirituality," let's not view it as "the answer" but rather as "the question." A question allows us to look more deeply. It allows us to search for what's true for us and, in so doing, enrich our own experience. It makes it safe and permissible to explore this territory in new and challenging ways. It helps us explore the depths of our own humanity.

What is spirituality for you? Where is spirit or spirituality dormant in your workplace? Where is it flourishing? Explore these kinds of questions in your relationships, your workplace, your division and your company. In this questioning, in this delving, notice the deepening of your own experience of spirituality at work.

The Benefits

One of the primary benefits of spiritual questioning is that people get more in touch with their creativity. In business, we all realize the value of creativity and innovation. Creativity is a cornerstone of business. It allows us to come out with new products and services that benefit many, helps us do more with less and can increase efficiency and productivity. When we get more in touch with the source of our creativity, we notice accompanying revitalization, renewal and resilience.

As we continue to move into a service-oriented and technological economy, we want innovation and creativity to keep on growing. "Human capital" has to be treated differently than "financial capital." We have to create an atmosphere in which creativity and innovation flourish. That is accomplished through our expression of spirit.

Another benefit is increased authenticity and genuineness in communication. Spirituality in the workplace creates "safe space" in which people feel permission to talk about what their

truth is, without fear of retribution. Most businesses aren't used to this. However, when it's safe to speak the truth, old problems clear up, new possibilities open up and people feel more aligned.

A third benefit is increased ethical and moral behavior. We trust ethical people. Employees trust employers, employers trust employees. Customers who trust a company stay customers longer.

Finally, spirituality in the workplace promotes the expression of talent, brilliance and genius: talent in the sense of our Divine gifts and the brilliance of our focused and renewed intellect. It lets us experience genius not as a scarce commodity but as something that everyone has. Our job becomes an opportunity to connect with that innate genius.

The Result

What would a more spiritual workplace mean for people? It would mean that work would move from being merely a place to get enough money to survive - from just a place to earn our "daily bread" - to being a place of "livelihood," a place where we both survive and are fully alive. We are fully alive when our spirit fully expresses itself. What's more, that expression nourishes other peoples' spirits. We can all flourish.

3738 GREAT GIVING

We do not have yet figures for India. We have for USA. A report "Giving USA 1996" says that Americans gave a total of \$143.85 BILLION for philanthropy. Of this staggering amount, \$116.23 billion (nearly 80%) came from "individuals" (who had the money and more importantly the heart to share). Foundations (we call them trusts) gave \$10.44 billion (about 7%) while corporations contributed \$7.40 billion (or about 5% of the total). The rest amounting to \$9.77 billion (about 7% of the total) came from "bequests" or wills. Having discretionary funds may not be the privilege of many. Those who have this privilege have **another** privilege they can exercise - the privilege of funding worthwhile causes. Exercising such a privilege can make a difference for the quality of life - theirs and others.

3739 TRANSFORMATION TRAIL;

Because of the fast changing environment, organizations are taking large-scale transformation exercises. Some of the efforts seem to fail. Arthur D. Little Co. made a global research study. According to this study, there is a ten step pathway to successful transformation. The steps are:

- Communicate urgency. Create a "burning platform" that will stimulate action.
- Clarify the change process. Develop and communicate a clear mechanism for information-gathering and decision-making.
- Act quickly. Immediately put a stop to whatever is causing the worst damage.
- Focus energy. Provide the necessary financial, technological and human resources.
- Develop capabilities. Develop people and bring in new blood at all levels.
- Realign measures. Set "stretch" goals and establish new measures commensurate with the new direction.
- Visibly reward people who practise innovation.
- Share success broadly. Celebrate visible signs of change within the organization.
- Embed transformational capability. Position the organization for continuous revitalization and renewal.

3740 RESOLUTIONS INTO REALITIES;

Many of us make New Year Resolutions - only to find they have remained resolutions; they have not become realities. We may afford this as individuals but not as members of an organization.

Someone has found a way out - a way that can help organizations effect accelerated self-development.

We will be glad to hear your experiences end of 1998.

Have you made your New Year's Resolutions?

If you're like most of us, when you have five minutes, you'll sit down, make a list of do's and don'ts, polish a phrase or two, then tack the list neatly to your office shelf - right next to those glossy conference binders once revered for their inspiration but long forgotten in the daily grind.

Our advice: This year, don't make the resolutions in a vacuum.

Five years ago, as friends and co-workers, we vowed to get together each December to review our accomplishments for the past year and draft our goals for the year ahead. Not only have we managed to keep that yearly promise, but we meet periodically throughout the year to help each other stay on track.

We had no magic formula. No lightning bolt zapped us from on high; no tablets dropped at your feet. We simply decided to list our dreams and try to make them come true. Something begun in so casual a manner has become a long-term commitment with considerable rewards.

When we began, one of us was a loyal disciple of Steven Covey, author of "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" (his workbook bulged from within her Daytimer). The other was, well, shall we say, a religious slob. But we're both optimists, and as we reached our second year of goal setting, we thought it made sense to adapt Covey's philosophy for our task. The addition spurred us on. Here's how it works.

Toward the end of the year, we each develop a list of individual goals arranged within Covey's five lifestyle categories: Personal, Professional, Social, Spiritual and Family. For instance, one year one of us resolved to learn a new language, join Toastmasters International, renew several lost friendships, volunteer for a church project and spend more time with an aging parent.

We list as many goals as practical within each category, and we make them measurable when possible.

Next, we meet to share and refine our goals and attach timelines to them. Then we're on our way toward making them a reality. Throughout the year, we hone the process in whatever manner we wish. For instance, one of us makes quarterly weekend retreats to fine-tune her business goals. The other reviews her personal goals with close family members. But we monitor results on all resolutions together periodically in sessions that are rich with humour, ideas and insights.

We have found that many "inspired" goals can turn unreasonable under certain conditions.

Likewise, important ones can easily be forgotten unless we remind each other of our commitment to them ("Hold my feet to the fire!" has become our mantra). Other goals may best be accomplished with the support of colleagues. The bottom line: We stay flexible.

Our commitment has paid off. We have expanded our skills and our creativity. We have enhanced strengths and faced weaknesses. We have taken pride in our accomplishments, and we have learned what is (and isn't) important to us. And our friendship has grown.

Are we meeting goals? One of us is becoming fluent in a difficult language and is taking pride in developing her 3-year-old company into a respected business. The other is learning how to play a musical instrument, has renewed relationships with a long forgotten branch of the family and recently established her own consulting firm.

Could we have achieved such things individually? Perhaps. But we wouldn't have seen half the results or had half the fun. For us, the greatest chance for successfully realizing our dreams comes when they are developed in a creative, collaborative atmosphere that includes the support of those we care about what we do and can become.

Don't let the holidays absorb all of your time this month. Take some time to plan for the future - and have a happy new year.

— Carol A. Lucas and Carol A. Staiger

3741 360° FEEDBACK

The conventional feedback is from the senior to the junior. A recent innovation is the 360 degree feedback. Each person gets a feedback from the senior, AND the Junior, AND the colleague, AND the customer. Though the idea is to help the individual, the individual feels disturbed by the very thought of such a feedback. To a query by a reader, Professor John W. Hunt of the London Business School replies thus in the Financial Times (London):

You're right to be concerned: done badly, 360 degree feedback is potentially lethal. But handled carefully, these surveys can provide a powerful lever for change. For the first time in many organisations, the capability of the manager is assessed by those he or she manages.

First, let us be clear what you are talking about. There are numerous forms of this feedback. You probably already have an annual appraisal system where you as a boss assess the performance of your direct reports (subordinates), help them establish goals and prioritise them, and discuss their training needs. The annual review is one way to ensure the flow of feedback that we need to keep us well adjusted.

Companies rarely jump straight from a traditional appraisal scheme to 360 degree feedback. Usually they experiment with a survey of the direct reports of a manager - called in the trade a 180 degree feedback survey. Most frequently the survey is part of a management development course.

If this were you, you would select one of the feedback questionnaires on the market, or design your own, distribute it to your direct reports and ask them to complete it. They would then send it anonymously to an outside agent for processing. The aggregated results would be fed back to you as part of the management development course and would provide the structure for the skills training on that course.

From 180 degree the surveys might be extended from your direct reports to include bosses and peers. So, in hierarchical terms, a complete circle of people - boss, peer, and subordinate, hence 360 degree - is surveyed anonymously. You would also complete the survey as a self-assessment to compare your results with those of the others.

When the external consultant or business school has processed the data they are likely to compare your results with those of much larger samples of managers, in your industry, in the country, and so on. Only the aggregated results are fed back to you, so no one individual's responses are identifiable.

Some surveys use only ranked questions such as "how effective is this manager in building teams?" In answer, you select a point on a scale from "very effective" to "very ineffective". Others use a combination of ranked questions and of text questions in which respondents write, in their own words, responses to specific questions - for example, "how could this manager make your department more effective?"

Why do I say feedback like this is potentially lethal? There have been numerous examples where the trust that is essential to the success of this process has been violated. For example, managers who do not like their feedback conduct an inquisition by asking respondents to indicate which were their responses. If this happens, it is essential that the person handling the survey becomes involved immediately, confronts the manager and puts out a potential bush fire. Otherwise, the process of introducing a more open feedback of opinion can be set back for years.

I know of one financial institution that will probably never touch 360 degree feedback again after a consultant sold the top group the idea. His method was to interview the manager and each of his direct reports to find what they liked and disliked about each other. He then assembled that manager and his/her direct reports in one room and fed back verbatim what each had said about the other. The outcome was shattering.

I am often asked whether 360 degree feedback should be used to determine people's pay. More and more organisations are measuring the performance of individuals and groups against predetermined criteria. One-obvious criterion for assessing managers should be managerial competence. The 360 degree survey could, it is argued, be used to provide measures of this competence.

But this simple logic breaks down when objectives become muddled. Most 360 degree feedback is intended for personal development. Extending that objective to include an annual assessment of managerial competence as a basis for reward is risky. Managers will begin to manipulate the process by selecting only those people who will give them good results. We have even seen cases where it was clear that the managers had filled in all the questionnaires themselves.

A simple, short survey, used to establish a manager's "threshold" level of skills, can be built into the performance appraisal review to provide data for an annual assessment and for establishing rewards levels.

But anything more sophisticated and intended genuinely to help managers develop themselves should not be used for performance-related pay in this way, at least

until the people involved are familiar with the process and trust has developed.

You are clearly worried that your managers might be demotivated by negative comments. It is true that people tend to remember of negative and ignore the positive feedback. But the fact is that in the 15 years that we have been using 360 degree feedback the vast majority of feedback on managers is positive.

The reason for this is partly because total failures as managers are usually eliminated earlier in their careers and partly because respondents are revealing a great deal about themselves; who would want to be seen to be working for a gorilla indefinitely?

We have helped organizations to use this 360 degrees feedback among others in upgrading their performance appraisal systems since 1965 and some have benefited greatly. N.H.A

3742 A CEO SURVEY

A.T. Kearney Ltd., a leading international management consulting company, made a recent survey. According to this 1997 Global Business Survey, the top priorities of the world's CEOs are as follows:

1. Relationships with customers,
2. Cost competitiveness,
3. Effective use of information technology,
4. Managing change,
5. Shareholder value,
6. Revenue growth,

3743 LAUGHING MATTER?



*"Oh, great! With this new software,
I can see all my debts neatly displayed on a screen!"*

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7. Industry restructuring,
8. Globalization,
9. Value-added relationships with suppliers

Commenting on this survey, Gayle MacDONALD writes in Globe and Mail.

Customer relations has become the leading priority of the world's chief executive officers, relegating cost competitiveness to No.2, a new survey by A.T.Kearney Ltd, says.

The management consulting firm interviewed executives at 450 companies worldwide who rated relationships with customers, cost competitiveness and effective use of information technology as the most important items on their agenda.

This contrasts with a similar A.T.Kearney survey in 1994, which ranked cost competitiveness, changing customer needs and shareholder value as the most critical issues.

David Tait, a principal with A.T. Kearney in Toronto, says customers have become the focus because the economic cycle has shifted dramatically in the past three years. "Companies are more concerned with growth than cost-cutting today than they were in 1994."

Senior management at financial institutions, communications and electronics firms, health care and pharmaceutical organizations, and chemical companies ranked strong customer ties "critically important."